

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN FORESTS OF WISCONSIN

A Guide to Assist with Forestry Activities

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INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin is governed by both the federal and state endangered species acts. The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1973 to protect species of plants and animals that are in danger of disappearing from the face of the earth. The ESA also protects the habitats on which these species depend. Under the ESA, plants or animals currently facing extinction are classified as “endangered.” In other situations, such dangers are less imminent though still quite real. In such cases, and where species are declining and may disappear in the near future, they are classified as “threatened.” The Wisconsin Endangered Species Act, passed by the state legislature, uses similar definitions for the words “endangered” and “threatened.” The state law includes a list of plants and animals that are especially rare in Wisconsin, activities that require permitting and how plant and animal rules may differ.

The federal ESA treats plants and animals differently. Animals that are listed as either endangered or threatened are automatically protected on both public and private lands. Listed plants, however, are protected primarily on federal lands such as national forests, national wildlife refuges and military bases.

Although listed plants need adequate protection on both public and private lands, ESA violations occur on private lands only if state laws, such as trespass or state endangered species laws, are broken.

Most forestry-related activities do not negatively affect threatened or endangered species as long as ecosystem-based sustainable forestry practices are used. However, situations may arise where there are conflicts between land management practices (such as forestry) and the protection of these species. In most of these cases, there are workable solutions. Compromises that not only protect the species in question, but also allow the land to be used for other legitimate purposes should be the goal of everyone. Through education, cooperation and compromise, these goals can and will be achieved.

The primary purpose of this manual is to acquaint those who work or recreate in Wisconsin's forests with the rare species that occur there. Also, this manual will assist foresters, landowners, loggers, site-preparers, herbicide applicators and other woods workers to avoid violations of either the federal or state endangered species acts. And, just as important, it will help avoid placing listed species of plants and animals in further jeopardy and making their recovery even more difficult.

If you believe your forestry or other land-use activity could harm or kill a listed species, or if you are uncertain whether it would, please contact the Wisconsin Bureau of Endangered Resources or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the locations noted in Appendix II for assistance.

SCOPE

This manual is intended primarily for use in Wisconsin, although many of the species covered also occur in other Great Lakes states. This manual does not include all Wisconsin federally and state-listed plants and animals, those species that are protected by state and federal laws. Instead, this manual includes only those species most likely to be affected by logging and other forestry operations. This manual was further limited to those species reasonably identifiable. A complete list of both federally- and state-listed endangered and threatened species is available from the Wisconsin Bureau of Endangered Resources. (See Appendix II.)

Periodically, species are added to and removed from the list of those protected by the federal and state endangered species acts. Information about changes in the status of rare species can be obtained from the sources listed in Appendix II.

There are individual accounts for the majority of species in this manual. Most accounts include a photograph or an illustration of the organism, a map showing where in the state it may be found and a written description. This description includes information on identifying characteristics and

habitat. Forestry practices that affect these protected plants and animals are also discussed.

Due to difficulties in individual species identification for fish and mollusks (clams and snails), and the fact that recognition beyond general group identification is not needed in most cases to protect these species, they are indicated only by name and range map. The field guides listed in Appendix II will provide additional information about many of these species.

Appendix I includes an alphabetical list of all the counties in Wisconsin and protected forestry-influenced species known to exist in each one. This list includes only documented sightings. Populations of species covered in this manual may exist in other counties.

This manual contains the best knowledge currently available from resource professionals about forestry considerations. However, there is still much to learn concerning management practices. The authors invite comments, corrections, new sightings and suggestions from readers.

Wisconsin Counties

